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ABSTRACT

This conference resulted in a proposal for a consortium of two-year colleges to perform the following functions: (1) disseminating information about continuing education activities, (2) tapping regional resources that inform on continuing education problems, (3) providing technical assistance in the field, (4) organizing short-term training programs for staff, and (5) researching, developing, and evaluating new systems. (CK)

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The New England Center for Continuing Education

The Two-Year College — Its Role in Continuing Education

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Conference Proceedings:

THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE -- ITS ROLE IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

A conference sponsored by

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Durham, New Hampshire

May 5-7, 1971

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"The Two-Year College--Its Role in Continuing Education"

Conference - May 5-7, 1971

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"The Two-Year College--Its Role in Continuing Education"

Conference - May 5-7, 1971

Program

Wednesday May 5

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Registration	Reception Area
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Social Hour	Gallery
6:00 p.m.	Dinner	Concord Dining Room
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Session I	Mansfield Room

"General Overview and Objectives of Conference"
Dr. Harry P. Day, Director, New England Center for Continuing Education
Dr. William Lauroesch, New England Center/ University of Massachusetts Program Director
Dr. Seymour Eskow, President, Rockland Community College, Suffern, New York

Thursday May 6

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Concord Dining Room
9:00 a.m.	Session II	Mansfield Room

"A Look at Community Resources"
Mrs. Ethel M. Case, Director of Community Services, Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, Massachusetts

10:30 a.m.	Coffee	
10:45 a.m.	Session II resumed	
12:00 noon	Lunch	Concord Dining Room
1:30 p.m.	Session III	

"Service Aspect of the Community College"
J. Kenneth Cummiskey, Director of Community Service Projects, American Association of Junior Colleges

"Educational Innovation by Private Enterprise"
Joseph Beckmann, Abt Associates

2:45 p.m.	Coffee	
3:00 p.m.	Session III resumed	
6:00 p.m.	Dinner	Concord Dining Room
7:30 p.m.	Session IV	Mansfield Room

"The Role of the Two-Year College in Occupational Education"
Charles Foltz, Director, New England Occupational Education

Friday May 7

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Concord Dining Room
9:00 a.m.	Session V	Mansfield Room

"New Developments in Continuing Education"
Harold Talbot, President, Cambridge Junior College
Jack P. Hudnall, President, Bristol Community College

"Summary and Observations"
Dr. Marie Martin
Dr. Seymour Eskow

10:30 a.m.	Coffee	
10:45 a.m.	Session V resumed	
12:00 noon	Lunch	Concord Dining Room
1:30 p.m.	Adjournment	

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Edited by William Lauroesch

If risk taking is praiseworthy, then the planning and conduct of this conference is worthy of praise. To convene so diverse a group of independent Yankees is indeed a risky business. Finding in the end the reward of common regional cause would, however, seem to have warranted the risk.

Among the conference participants were representatives of the three types of institutions in the two-year college sector--the technical institutes, the private junior colleges, and the public comprehensive community colleges. There were representatives of state, regional, and national agencies concerned either with two-year colleges or continuing education or both. Finally, there were representatives from private industry, universities, and specialists from the New England Center for Continuing Education.

To set the stage for discussion, Dr. Harry Day, Director of the New England Center for Continuing Education, provided a brief history of the efforts of a consortium of New England Land Grant Universities in bringing about regional cooperation. He pointed out that the New England Regional Program, funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, had made possible the formation of both the New England Center for Continuing Education and the Two-Year College Faculty Development Project at the University of Massachusetts, the co-sponsors of this conference.

Dr. William Lauroesch, Project Director at the University of Massachusetts, reviewed the conference objectives. He pointed out that there was no litany of continuing education, that the group was free to establish its own operational definition. He viewed the definition of institutional role in continuing education as necessary but insufficient, and he expressed the hope that the conference would go beyond definition to find its way to a commitment and a plan for action.

Toward defining the role of the two-year college in continuing education, Dr. Lauroesch said, the conference participants would first have to deal with the question of educational purpose. He pointed out that each of the variant forms of the two-year college had come into being to serve some perceived educational need; consequently, that each institution's history and tradition impinged on its own conception of its role in continuing education. More important than a view of institutions, he suggested, is a view of the changing world. He asked the group to look for emerging patterns of educational need, to determine which of these needs can best be addressed under the rubric of continuing education, and then to decide to what extent the two-year institutions are suitable environments in which to meet these needs.

Dr. Seymour Eskow, President of Rockland Community College, Suffern, New York, challenged the group to search for institutional definition, not by examining catalogue rhetoric, but by "seeing ourselves by what we do." By that

standard the two-year colleges are not as unique as they would have the world believe. Much that is there is copied format. He argued that singular style made institutions ill-equipped to deal with pluralism among student sub-cultures. "Response to differences must be different." He cited the cluster concept as ostensibly providing learning alternatives, but asserted that it would fail to accomplish that end if it merely duplicated the central campus. He urged the group to look at shopping centers, libraries, and other such settings as potential satellite campuses.

Dr. Eskow closed by noting that Americans have a tendency to see themselves, their country, and their schools as better than they really are, but saw as encouraging that we are trying to close the gap.

Mrs. Ethel Case, Director of Community Services at Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, Massachusetts, used a multi-media presentation to indicate the number and variety of community resources having potential for continuing education and community services. "Know your community," she said, "and don't duplicate services that already exist." She gave suggestions for compiling a directory of community services and ways to identify and utilize people. "You simply can't pay people what they are worth," she told the group, "but if they want to teach, they will do it even without pay." This is not to say, she added, that everything offered will be free. "You won't get help until you ask," she said, "and the best way to get solid support from people and agencies

is to give a piece of the action."

Mrs. Case's presentation prompted a series of questions and stimulated open discussion. This discussion, as Dr. Kenneth Cummiskey, Director of the Community Services Project of the American Association of Junior Colleges, pointed out was not moving productively because of a conflict between the personal agendas and the group agenda of the conference. Before it could continue, he said, it was necessary for the group to sort out different and common interests as a means to weaving the threads of community.

Dr. Cummiskey took issue with the belief expressed in discussion that each two-year institution was highly individual and could pattern itself after other institutions. From his reservoir of experience in directing a comprehensive study of community services he drew several illustrations of exemplary programs which could serve to inform on efforts to generate programs in this region. He also pointed to higher education as a resource and instrument. "The difference between adult education and continuing education," Dr. Cummiskey said, "is not so much who it is for as how we arrive at what it does."

Joseph Beckman, Staff Consultant for Abt Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, indicated that a failure on the part of institutions to use consulting services wisely frequently leads to fruitless dissipation of resources. By use of pointed illustrations he demonstrated how and for what consultant services should be used.

Charles Foltz, Executive Director of the New England Resource Center for Occupational Education (NERCOE), developed his remarks around data to the effect that 87 percent of all jobs require less than an A.B. degree and that 75 percent of the jobs require only a high school education. Using his experience as a member of the Appalachian Regional Commission, Mr. Foltz outlined strategies for building resources cooperatively on a regional basis.

Harold Talbot, President of Cambridge Junior College, indicated the potential electronic learning centers hold for continuing education and community services. He described the center installed by Learning Foundations International at his college and how it has been utilized both for in-house tutorial work and as a community learning center as well. He pointed out that there are two basic mistakes to avoid, namely, that it is good for everyone and that it is good for everything. On the other hand, he pointed out that it is a powerful resource for individualizing instruction. To realize its full potential cost effectively, Mr. Talbot said, it would require multi-institutional cooperation and sharing. He invited the group to consider the possibility of forming a consortium to maintain a software resource center, to develop new curriculum, to maintain a single training program for center supervisors, and to facilitate joint access to hardware facilities for contiguous institutions.

Jack Hudnall, President of Bristol Community College,

Fall River, Massachusetts, reinforced Mr. Talbot's position by citing extent electronic systems already in operation that should have wider utilization. The remainder of his remarks emphasized the philosophical posture he believed was prerequisite to program development.

Mr. Hudnall pointed out that his institution thought in terms of continuing education and regional (not community) services. It is necessary from the outset, he said, to have these facets of program established as priorities. Making them so is a conscious decision. A staff position for this purpose should be a line item on the first program budget.

Note: Objective reporting of the spontaneous questions and discussion during and following presentations is a futile exercise. Such a report is at the mercy of the observer's bias; moreover, it is limited to the observer's ability to grasp accurately and distill the sense of the moment and the flow of dialogue.

The sense of the first evening's discussion is perhaps crystallized in a small exchange that took place after the meeting was adjourned. When one of the participants told Dr. Eskow he had found his remarks provocative, Dr. Eskow corrected him saying, "You mean provoking." This is by way of agreeing with Dr. Cummiskey's perception of the presence of individual agendas and the absence of group

purpose or identity. The conference purpose "to define the role of two-year colleges in continuing education" did not preclude the prior existence of such a definition in the minds of individual participants, each from the perspective of his own individual setting. It was impossible to be unaware of the tension generated by the clash of alien perspectives. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that at this time the participants were yet strangers to one another.

On Thursday morning, reassured by a beautiful day and the pleasant surroundings of the New England Center and encouraged by the inviting manner of Mrs. Case's presentation, the participants moved easily into discussion. It was still apparent--and quite natural--that personal agendas still dominated. There were, however, seeds of common cause, although not identified as such. Whether or not the group could have worked itself out of its box without Dr. Cummiskey's deliberate efforts to deal with the process is a mute question; it remains, however, that after the awkward confrontation early in the afternoon there appeared to be clearer direction and accretive progress toward closure.

By Friday morning there was near consensus on the need for organized cooperation through a consortium or other means. Some of the functions suggested for such a consortium were:

1. Disseminating and diffusing information about continuing education activities
2. Tapping regional resources that inform on continuing education problems

3. Providing technical assistance in the field

4. Organizing short-term training programs for staff (e.g., continuing education program directors, innovation implementers, decision makers)

5. Researching, developing, and evaluating new systems.

Three different courses toward regional cooperation were proposed:

1. Enlist the cooperation of interested institutions and agencies in the attack on a single problem (e.g., development of a network of compatable electronic learning centers, with software procurement, evaluation, development, and retrieval carried out on a cost-shared basis).

2. Develop a regional organization to address itself to those activities which would be enhanced by regional cooperation.

3. Establish a New England Regional Two-Year College as a means to maximizing the availability and utilization of regional resources and learning opportunities for creating and managing extra-institutional learning experiences, and for facilitating movement within the region for those seeking multi-institutional learning experience.

Dr. Seymour Eskow, charged with the responsibility for conference summation, yielded to Dr. Marie Martin, Director of Community College Education, United States Office of Education. Dr. Martin began by saying that the search for identity, as manifested by this conference, was a necessary beginning. She lauded the decision to include all types of two-year colleges (viz., private junior colleges, technical institutes, comprehensive community colleges). She saw the discussions of consortium and reform in education as consistent with the mode of thinking in Washington, but viewed

emphasis on degrees as something already being rejected. Dr. Martin reported that she found concerns in New England much the same as those in other parts of the country, with New England having a slight edge in thinking regionally.

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